

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022

# Courant Community

Courant Community | Thursday, March 24, 2022

LOCAL NEWS

## Fundraiser a touchdown for school



Maple Street School students Amanda Davila and Kevin Fair show footballs signed by Tom Brady, left, and Rob Gronkowski. Principal Josh Egan (background) reached out to a friend and college roommate last year, asking for help raising money for the school in Vernon's Rockville section. Egan's friend, who works for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, delivered the two signed footballs. Story, page 3. **MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT**

LOCAL NEWS



'The Dads' come up with many punny reasons why they didn't kill comedy. **STEVE SMITH/COURANT COMMUNITY**

### Students producing Murder Mystery

Rockville High's whodunit explores the death of comedy, and the suspects are the types of comedy. **Pages 8-9**

LOCAL NEWS

### Locals celebrating milestones

From a second birthday to a 70th birthday and everywhere in between, we wish them all the best. **Page 4**

LOCAL NEWS

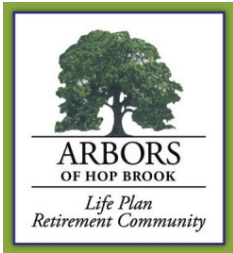
### 'Spring into Healthy Living' event coming

South Windsor families will learn healthier lifestyle habits and about what the town has to offer. **Page 5**

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## Stafford Prayer Shawl Ministry to meet in April

VERNON — STAFFORD — The Stafford Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the second Monday of each month, except July and August, in the Stafford Public Library from 2 to 3 p.m. The date of the next meeting will be on Monday, April 11, at 10 Levinthal Run.

The group welcomes individuals who would like to attend and knit, crochet, or quilt much-needed prayer shawls. Members will teach guests how to knit or crochet. All are welcome.

If you cannot make the meeting but want to make prayer shawls at home, someone will pick them up. If you or your pastor knows of anyone who could use a prayer shawl, the group will arrange for one to be picked up. Contact Karen at 860-982-5896 or Kathy at 860-684-9484 for information or pick-up arrangements.

## Women's Club hosting egg fundraiser, kids' fair

SOUTH WINDSOR — The South Windsor Community Women's club wants to Egg your house. Club members are poised to lightly hide eggs and plant lollipop flowers on front lawns on the eve of Easter, April 16.

Eggs are filled with wrapped candies and small toy prizes and/or stickers. Lollipop flowers will be planted in a visible area.

Email [info@swcwclub.org](mailto:info@swcwclub.org) to place an order. Eggs are \$15 a dozen or \$12 if you order three or more dozen and lollipop flowers are \$1 each. The club will invoice you after you order for contactless payment. All proceeds go toward scholarships and community causes.

The kids' fair at South Windsor High School, 161 Nevers Road, will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, April 15, after the South Windsor Park and Recreation egg hunt. Games, crafts and snacks will be available.

## Manchester Library hosting programs

MANCHESTER — The Manchester

Public Library, 586 Main St., is hosting the following programs. Visit <http://library.townofmanchester.org> or call 860-645-0821 for more information or to register.

Middle School Nights for grades six to eight will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday in March. Play a variety of computer and video games with other middle schoolers.

'Coming Together to Help Community Cats With Our Companions Animal Rescue' will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, March 28.

Have you ever wondered about the roaming cats in your neighborhood? Who do they belong to? Who is caring for them? Where do they eat and sleep? What happens if they are sick or injured? How can we prevent more kittens from being born outside? Staff from Our Companions Animal Rescue will share their expertise and ways you can get involved. This is a free in-person program for adults. No registration is required.

## E. Hartford Garden Club offering \$750 scholarship

EAST HARTFORD — The East Hartford Garden Club will award one \$750 scholarship to any full or part time student who is a resident of Andover, Bolton, Bloomfield, Coventry, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury, Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storrs or Windsor Locks.

The student must be majoring in horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, environmental concerns, botany and other allied subjects.

Applications with the submittal instructions are available at the Guidance Department of the attending school. All completed applications must be received by April 1 to be considered.

## Hillstown Grange hosting spaghetti supper, seed swap

EAST HARTFORD — The Hillstown Grange, 617 Hills St., is holding a spaghetti dinner on Thursday, March 24. Dinner starts at 6 p.m. and cost is \$5.

Following dinner, a free seed giveaway

and a seed swap will take place. Bring any extra seeds you may have to donate to the swap table.

Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions and talk about the Grange's outreach gardening programs. Email Dan Gallagher at [daninct@yahoo.com](mailto:daninct@yahoo.com) for more info on Master Gardeners and to get on the gardening help email list.

Located in the Hillstown corner of East Hartford, Glastonbury, and Manchester, the Grange is one of the oldest Agricultural groups in the United States. For more information, email [hillstowngrange@aol.com](mailto:hillstowngrange@aol.com) or call Frank at 860-690-2845.

## Grange hosting chicken-raising workshop

EAST HARTFORD — The Hillstown Grange will host a workshop on raising chickens from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31, at 617 Hills St.

This workshop will discuss the raising and keeping of chickens and how to find out about local ordinances. Learn how to determine the amount of space you need along with other basic requirements, common problems you may encounter, while passing on tips and tricks for dealing with and preventing predators and diseases.

The workshop is open to all and is free. The Hillstown Grange Hall is located in the Hillstown corner of East Hartford, Glastonbury and Manchester. Contact Frank Forrest at [hillstowngrange@aol.com](mailto:hillstowngrange@aol.com) or Dan Gallagher at [daninct@yahoo.com](mailto:daninct@yahoo.com) with questions.

## Arts Center East hosting members' show

VERNON — Arts Center East, 709 Hartford Turnpike, is hosting the following programs. Call 860-871-8222 or visit [www.artscentereast.org](http://www.artscentereast.org) for more information or to register.

The 11th annual Artist Members Exhibit will run through March 26. Gallery hours are Thursday through Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. The exhibit is free and open to the public and viewable online at [www.artscentereast.org/artist-members-exhibit](http://www.artscentereast.org/artist-members-exhibit). The gift

shop will be open during the exhibit.

Still Lives & The Legacy of Charles Ethan Porter will run from April 1 to 30. Visit [www.artscentereast.org/still-lives](http://www.artscentereast.org/still-lives) to view the exhibit online.

The exhibit of contemporary still lifes will feature artwork and information about 19th and early 20th century Rockville artist, Charles Ethan Porter. Porter not only studied art at the National Academy of Design in New York City, he was one of the first Black artists to exhibit there. He was the only Black artist at the turn of the century who painted still lifes. His work can be found in collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Wadsworth Athenaeum, and more.

The Art of Paper Quilling will take place from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday, March 25. Cost is \$45 and all materials are included. The instructor is Amelia Day. This is an introductory class to paper quilling, where participants will make various scrolls and rolls. Each student will be given a customized quilling kit.

This is a beginner class for paper crafters. Though not a requirement, students with experience in handling paper projects such as scrapbooking, origami, paper flowers or similar will find this class agreeable. A certain amount of dexterity in the fingers is required.

A pastel and still life workshop with discussion of the still life works of Charles Ethan Porter will take place Saturday, April 30, and Sunday, May 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a break for lunch.

Cost is \$120 and the instructor is Karen Israel. The deadline to register is April 25 and class is limited to 10 students. Students are asked to show proof of vaccination upon registration. All visitors to Arts Center East are asked to wear a mask while in the building. A discussion and tour of the works of Charles E. Porter will accompany this workshop. All levels are welcome.

## Kent Library hosting virtual haiku program

Turn to Community News, Page 4

# Courant Community

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### News and content submissions

Contact Courant Community Editor Erin Quinlan at 860-875-3366, Ext. 3030 or [equinlan@courant.com](mailto:equinlan@courant.com).

Send press releases, community events and photos, news tips or letters to the editor to [community@courant.com](mailto:community@courant.com). To submit Good Neighbor items, birthday greetings, engagement or wedding announcements, email

[community@courant.com](mailto:community@courant.com).

Send news items by mail to Courant Community, PO Box 569, Hartford, CT 06141-0569, or by fax to 860-875-9552.

### Advertising options

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# Vernon school scores autographed Brady and Gronk footballs

By Jesse Leavenworth  
Hartford Courant

A Vernon elementary school principal reached out to an old friend and former college roommate last year, asking for help raising money for the school that serves mostly low-income families.

Maple Street School Principal Josh Egan's friend, who works for the 2021 Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers, delivered gold — two footballs, one signed by Bucs quarterback Tom Brady and one by tight end Rob "Gronk" Gronkowski.

"There's very few times I'm in shock and don't know what to do, and this was one of those times," Egan said.

The school is raffling the balls ([bit.ly/3pXFSBs](https://bit.ly/3pXFSBs)) at \$10 an entry, with proceeds going to the PTO and student activity fund. The money will ensure that students can attend field trips regardless of their families' ability to pay, Egan said.

For years, raising funds has been tough, Egan said. Maple Street School has the highest percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals in the district.

Egan talked to his friend, one of the Buccaneers' assistant video

directors, about anything he could do to help and heard back just before the holidays. The friend told him he should expect a package soon.

The man, who wanted to remain anonymous, had left letters for Brady and Gronkowski at their lockers, telling them about his friend and his school in Connecticut. Egan was expecting a T-shirt or a hat, maybe a jersey from the team's third-string quarterback.

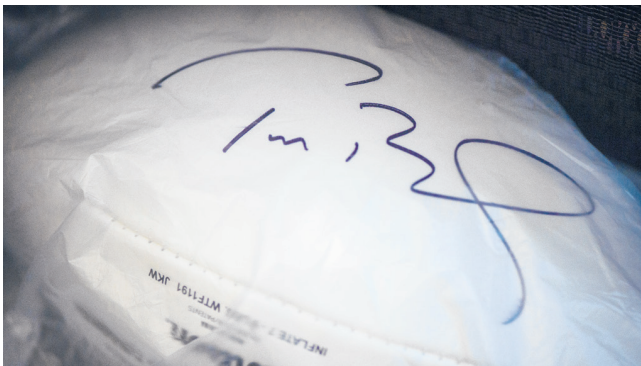
He opened the first box and saw Gronkowski's number, 87, and the signature of the former New England Patriots star, who is just as famous for his off-the-field exploits. Still trying to process his school's good fortune, Egan said he opened the other box to find a football signed by the former Patriots quarterback and seven-time Super Bowl winner, who many call "The Greatest of All Time." He noted that Brady signed the ball before he retired.

The raffle runs through April 7, and the drawing for two winners is set for April 8. As of March 18, more than \$14,000 has been raised.

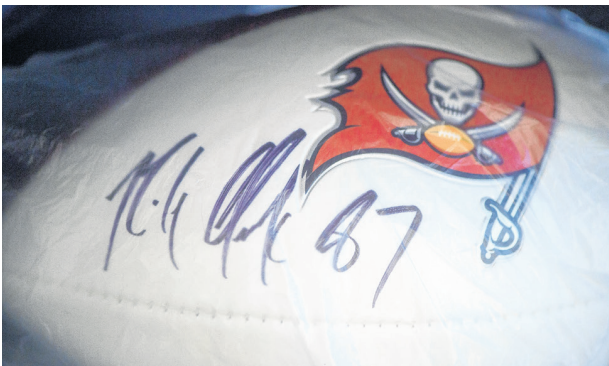
— Jesse Leavenworth  
can be reached at [jleavenworth@courant.com](mailto:jleavenworth@courant.com).



Maple Street School students Amanda Davila and Kevin Fair show footballs signed by Tom Brady, left, and Rob Gronkowski. Principal Josh Egan (background) reached out to a friend and college roommate last year, asking for help raising money for the school in Vernon's Rockville section. Egan's friend, who works for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, delivered the two signed footballs. **MARK MIRKO/THE HARTFORD COURANT PHOTOS-**



The football signed by Tom Brady.



The football signed by Rob Gronkowski.

ORTHOPEDIC UPDATE

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## Community News

from Page 2

ENFIELD — SUFFIELD — ‘Haiku: Capturing Moments in Nature’ with poet Jennifer Y. Montgomery will take place virtually from 6 to 7 p.m. Monday, April 4.

Journey through the history of haiku and other forms of Japanese micro-poetry, from frogs to Zen meditation to clandestine feudal love letters.

Montgomery will then guide participants through the basics of writing haiku. Think about your favorite season and come prepared to write your own haiku. Visit [Suffield-library.org](http://Suffield-library.org) or call 860-668-3896 for more information or to register.

### Club offering \$750 scholarship

EAST HARTFORD — The East Hartford Garden Club will award one \$750 scholarship to any full or part time student who is a resident of Andover, Bolton, Bloomfield, Coventry, East Hartford, East Windsor, Glastonbury, Manchester, Middletown, Vernon, Storrs or Windsor Locks.

The student must be majoring in horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, environmental concerns, botany and other allied subjects.

Applications with the submittal instructions are available at the Guidance Department of the attending school. All completed applications must be received by April 1 to be considered.

### College names Windsor student to dean's list

NEW HAVEN — Matthew Lewczyk of Windsor, senior business major at Albertus Magnus College, was named to the dean's

list for the spring 2021 semester and for the fall semester of 2021. He is also a member of the Albertus Magnus baseball team.

### Library hosting Builders Club, tobacco industry program

ENFIELD — Using your choice of building materials, LEGO®, DUPLO®, Keva Planks® or Roominates®, see what you can build in an hour at the Builders Club program at the Enfield Public Library, 104 Middle Road, on Friday, March 25, at 3:45 p.m.

This is a drop-in program. Work independently or with friends. all the library at 860-763-7518 or 860-763-7512 or visit [www.enfieldpubliclibrary.org](http://www.enfieldpubliclibrary.org) for more information.

The Friends of the Enfield Library present Plant Pathologist Dr. James LaMondia at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 29. LaMondia will speak on the tobacco industry in Connecticut.

Contact Rob Sweeney at 860-749-9324 or [robsweeney2014@att.net](mailto:robsweeney2014@att.net) or Betsy Pillitteri at 860-749-3578 for more information on the Friends of the Library.

### Scantic Spring Splash canoe, kayak race taking place

ENFIELD-SOMERS — The Scantic River Watershed Association's 29th annual Scantic Spring Splash Canoe and Kayak Race is back after a two year absence due to Covid restrictions.

The race will take place on Saturday, March 26. The rain date is April 2. Registration is held from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Powder Mill Barn, 32 South Maple St.

The registration fee is \$25 per participant (any paddler). The race committee is supporting the Enfield Food Shelf by collecting donations of cash or non-perishable food items. Spectators and paddlers are encouraged to bring a donation for the food shelf.

The start for all racers is at 27 Quality Ave. Parking at the start is restricted so plan on a quick boat drop and then drive your car to the end-destination of your race.

Paddlers this year are responsible for providing their own transportation from the finish line parking area to the starting point. There will be no shuttle bus provided this year. The novice race is canceled for this year. The longer five mile race has a noon start. A mandatory race safety meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m.

All participants will be required to wear safety helmets and wear approved over-the-shoulder PFD. All participants are encouraged to wear wet suits due to the cold water. Rentals can be reserved for the

Turn to Community News, Page 7

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Courant Community will print a current birthday photo FREE in one edition. Submit a current photo and 15-word description including name, age, birthday, town, your name, daytime phone number to [community@courant.com](mailto:community@courant.com) or to Courant Community, P.O. Box 569, Hartford, CT 06141. Please submit three weeks in advance to avoid disappointment.



**Happy 9th Birthday, Andrea (3/22):** “May all your wishes come true! Love, Mami, Dada, Omar, and Grandparents.”



**Happy 6th Birthday, Isabela (3/23):** “You are clever, funny, kind, and so talented! Love, Mommy.”



**Happy 13th Birthday, Vanessa (3/25):** “Hope you enjoy your day! Love Mom, Cip, Colin, Gram Gram, Poppy, and Uncle Jon.”



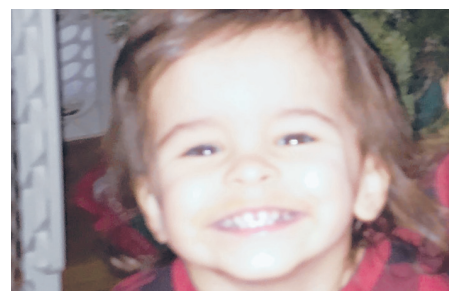
**Happy 10th Birthday, Noah (3/26):** “Love from all of your family!”



**Happy 38th Birthday, Renee (3/29):** “Best Mom ever! Love you, Cip, Vanessa, Colin, Poppy, Mom, and Jon.”



**Happy 8th Birthday, Joi (3/27):** “May each day bring you love, laughter, and JOY! We love you! Your family.”



**Happy 2nd Birthday, Cole (3/17):** “We love watching you grow! Twice the hugs and kisses! Love, Daddy, Mommy, Austin, Nana.”



**Happy 70th Birthday, Marguerite (3/15):** “We wish you many more healthy, happy years. Your friends at bldg #60.”

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS FOR TODAY'S PUZZLE

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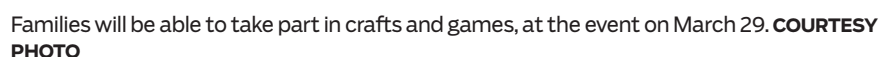


**By Steve Smith**  
 Courant Community

"The middle school and high school officers will be joining us," explained Danielle Bilfolck, MSW intern and teen center coor-

The Alliance is comprised of police officers, school

For more information, contact Bifolck at 860-648-6360.





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# Here are the buildings that could be part of Hartford's ambitious Parkville Arts & Innovation District

By Kenneth R. Gosselin  
Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — An ambitious \$250 million plan to raise Hartford's profile as a hub for digital innovation and advanced manufacturing is getting down to street level, building-by-building, as the city seeks state funding to boost its vision for the Parkville Arts & Innovation District.

A 500-plus page proposal seeking nearly \$50 million from the state's innovation corridor grant program details plans for a dozen properties in the heart of Parkville, once a hub of manufacturing turning out bicycles, typewriters and automobiles.

The linchpin of the city's plan is creating innovation space to form startups while providing space for them to grow and creating jobs at all skill levels.

"Advanced manufacturing, much like health care and insurance, is increasingly driven by digital technology," Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin said. "We want young people to know that. We want young people to see it. We want to connect these young people to these tech jobs in this core industry in our community."

While the plan rests heavily on encouraging innovation, it also seeks to create a walkable neighborhood with new housing and after-hours dining and entertainment, all aimed at revitalizing a long impoverished area of the city.

The push for the district comes from a coalition of the city, public and private funding agencies, nonprofits, colleges and private sector employers.

New Britain-based Stanley Black & Decker, the tool and equipment storage maker, has helped lead the effort, contributing \$5 million to attract another \$20 million from a private investor.

Redevelopment efforts in Parkville are underway, but achieving the broader vision will depend heavily on winning the state grant. Decisions are expected in late spring.

If successful, Bartholomew Street — considered the "spine" of the new district — could see

a building that once turned out steel tubing for Columbia bicycles become co-working and incubator space fostering digital technology.

Another structure — a long-abandoned boiler building that once supplied neighborhood manufacturers — would become a center for workforce training.

And there would be new construction: apartments and a 352-space parking garage on a parking lot near the corner of Bartholomew Avenue and Park Street. The garage would help ease a lack of parking options.

## 'It's something big and bad'

At the southern end of Bartholomew, entrepreneur and developer Bob Hussain and his family hope the historic but decaying Hanson-Whitney Co. factory will become an important cog in the new district.

Hussain, a former pharmacist from Ridgefield, has been buying and rehabilitating blighted residential and mixed-use structures in Hartford for nearly two decades. He bought the factory building last year in a tax deed sale, and a renovation would be his largest in the city.

Visible from I-84, the 90,000-square-foot structure was on the city's list of most troubled buildings.

The structure and property were used for illegal dumping, with between 80 to 100 dumpsters of trash already removed from the site, Hussain said. Stolen cars turned up there, some of them having been torched, he said.

The city considers the factory the right fit for small and mid-size companies that want to expand. The property also is adjacent to former metal scrapyard acquired by the city last year, where an industrial park for advanced manufacturing could be built.

Hussain sees beyond the broken windows, rotting floorboards and leaks from the ceiling to the strong underlying structure. During a tour, there is the sound of dripping water as snow melts off the roof.

"It's something big and bad," Hussain said. "Not bad-bad. This is a beautiful building. It doesn't look that way now, but it is beautiful."

## Cutting-edge co-working space

Hartford's plans for Parkville have attracted the attention of DISTRICT, a cutting-edge co-working and digital incubation space in New Haven.

If state funding is secured, DISTRICT would lead the redevelopment of the factory that once produced steel bicycle tubing and now is owned by a specialty packaging and boxing company.

David Salinas, DISTRICT's founder, said the idea behind DISTRICT for competing with tech giants in Silicon Valley means more than offering money to attract the best talent.

"So then how do you present the amenities that they do?" Salinas said. "How do you present the food options that they do? The only way to do that is in a shared, communal environment of like-minded people. That is key."

Salinas said the plans for Parkville have many of the right components, including varied ways of getting around: highway, CTfastrak, bus, bicycle and by foot.

The city has negotiated an option to purchase the building for \$2.1 million, contingent on winning the grant.

"The ecosystem that is being designed and presented in this area of Parkville is something that we are excited about," Salinas said. "We can be a big part of it."

## Jobs that pay a living wage

The plans for the district also include proposals for housing targeted to low- and moderate-income individuals and families, plus workforce development programs.

Hands On Hartford, a social services nonprofit that moved to Bartholomew Street six years ago, would be involved in two projects: construction of new afford-



Andrew Hussain stands at a rear entrance to a former factory at 169 Bartholomew in Hartford, perhaps in the worst condition of any building in the plans to develop the area as an innovation corridor. MARK MIRKO / THE HARTFORD COURANT

able rental units and creation of job training programs and collaborative workspace.

Barbara A. Shaw, the nonprofit's executive director, said the population served by Hands On Hartford needs "safe affordable homes, access to transportation, and the training and skills to get jobs that pay a living wage."

"We want them to have the opportunity to have successful careers, and this development gives us the opportunity to be part of a long-term solution to the economic challenges faced by too many of our neighbors," Shaw said.

Here is a property-by-property look at what is proposed for the Parkville Arts & Innovation District:

### 1. 17-35 Bartholomew Ave.

**Owner:** Carlos A. Mouta  
**Developers:** Carlos A. Mouta/ Hands On Hartford/Hartford Parking Authority

**Previous use:** Surface Parking Lot

**Planned use:** A five-story, 57-unit apartment building with storefront space on the ground level would replace the parking lot. Of the total units, 17 will be "affordable," with five units reserved for people transitioning from homelessness. The housing would be

wrapped around a 352-space parking garage, designed with a pedestrian bridge linking it to the nearby CTfastrak station.

**Total project cost:** Apartments: \$14 million (Innovation grant funds: \$6 million). Parking garage, \$14 million (Innovation grant funds: \$6.5 million).

**Completion:** Apartments, fall of 2024; parking garage in winter of 2025

### Powerhouse Building

**Address:** 45 Bartholomew Ave.  
**Year built:** 1912

**Owner/developer:** Hands On Hartford Inc.

**Previous use:** Boiler house for Hartford Rubber Works Co.; Billboard for Spaghetti Warehouse restaurant.

**Planned use:** A "collaborative center" of 33,200 square feet to be called "The Powerhouse," which would develop digital and innovation skills. Project is in partnership with Girls for Technology, Launc[H] and Trinity College.

**Total project cost:** \$17.2 million  
**Innovation grant funds:** \$6.3 million

**Completion:** Winter 2024

— Kenneth R. Gosselin can be reached at [kgosselin@courant.com](mailto:kgosselin@courant.com).



# GOOD NEIGHBOR

Your reader-to-reader column

## FREE:

**DRUMS, BIKE:** Kids' drum set and seated Schwinn stationary bike (electric). In good condition and must be picked up. 860-833-9376.

## QUESTIONS

**HAVE A HEART TRAP:** If anyone is willing to sell or lend a trap they are not using, call 860-989-1627.

**MANGLE:** Seeking mangle in working condition. 869-673-1296, leave a message.

**TREADMILL:** Wanted for COPD patient. Must be very small and simple. Will pay a fair price. Leave message at 860-827-1313.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Seeking transportation to medical appointments in Glastonbury and Putnam. Located in Stafford. Text or call 774-289-7888.

**PAIS:** Looking for five to six empty five-gallon plastic pails with covers. 860-729-7509.

**DESK:** Seeking desk in good condition with medium color wood or lighter. Glastonbury area. 860-430-2994 or 860-368-8087.

**CASSETTE PLAYER:** Looking for cassette player in very good condition. Willing to pay reasonable price. In Glastonbury area. 860-368-8087 or 860-430-2994.

**METAL SHELVEING:** Need metal shelving for an art project. 860-951-0095.

**GREEN TRIPE:** Seeking a farmer who can sell green tripe to feed to my dogs. 860-267-6040.

**MEMORY CARDS:** Looking for someone to donate or sell cheaply the following: A CF card or CF32 card for use in an older A85 canon camera or any SanDisk card, only 2.0 gigabytes. 860-648-9147.

**TABLET ASSISTANCE:** Seeking someone to set up tablet and phone. Will pay. 860-666-5699.

**FOUND:** Baseball Card in protective plastic cover found in Marlborough, Connecticut in 2014, unintentionally tucked away, and

recently uncovered. Send an email to cs-137@outlook.com with an accurate description of the card, and we'll get it back to the owner.

**SEEKING TO RENT:** At least 1,500 to 2,000 sq. ft. of cold storage. Rocky at 860-490-3816 or 860-872-6269.a

**DRONE FOUND:** Vicinity of Elm St & Courtney Drive, Rocky Hill. Text with description for return. 860-402-2655.

**FOUND EYEGLASSES:** Eyeglasses found on Carriage Drive, Manchester. 860-646-4242.

**AUTO MECHANIC:** Seeking auto mechanic to repair pickup truck. Am senior citizen, phone with reasonable price. 860-796-6132.

**FURNITURE:** Seeking a light wooden chest having five drawers in good condition. Call after 5 p.m. 860-665-0141.

**LOST BRACELET:** Bracelet lost at ALDIs of Rocky Hill by carriages. It was a birthday gift. Call if found. 860-778-8556.

**PUZZLE SWAP:** Will meet half way if too far to go. Have 20, most new. 860-568-1378.

**SEEKING:** Small boat trailer for a 12' boat, will buy. 860-741-2633.

**NECKLACE FOUND:** On Carillon Drive, Rocky Hill. Call with description for return. 860-965-6672. Messages will be returned.

**LAPTOPS:** Collecting used or new laptops from kind donors. These laptops will be donated to school kids in Ghana. Contact Ben, 423-676-8815.

**NAUTICAL ROPE:** Looking for free 1/2- or 3/4-inch nautical rope for DIY projects. 860-490-8956.

**PROPANE:** Seeking propane Salamander. Will pay a reasonable price. 860-749-2190.

**LAWN MOWING, SNOW REMOVAL:** Does anyone know of someone who mows grass and/or plows snow? 860-289-0101 after 5 p.m.

**CAR:** Seeking a donated good running car for elderly person in Putnam for doctor appointments. Cannot afford one. 508-335-5060. Leave a message.

## Be a good neighbor

To submit, send an email to community@courant.com or mail to 285 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06115. Good Neighbor is a service by Courant Community. Questions and answers are provided by our readers and are not verified. Medical information cannot be published. Caution should be exercised at all times. The publisher is not responsible for damage to any person or property.

## Community News

from Page 4

day of the race from Enfield Scuba & Water Sports at 860-745-7282.

Race course descriptions, registration forms, and further information is available by checking the website at <http://www.scanticspringsplash.org> or by contacting Jeff Dynia at [mdynia@yahoo.com](mailto:mdynia@yahoo.com), [info@scanticspringsplash.org](mailto:info@scanticspringsplash.org) or at 860-986-3572.

## Puppy Pride Fun Days seeking vendors

ENFIELD — Puppy Pride Fun Day, organized by the Enfield Dog Park Action Committee, will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 11, at The Loyal Order of Moose Lodge, 124 South Road.

Vendors are sought for the event. Booths are \$30 each. Other ways to support the event include donating a raffle item or advertising in the fundraising booklet. Park sponsorships range from \$100 to \$5,000. Email Bob Marshall at [enfielddogparkevents@gmail.com](mailto:enfielddogparkevents@gmail.com) with questions.

The park is a non-profit and not funded by the Town of Enfield. Donations will be used for recurring expenses that include, but are not limited to liability insurance, waste bags, tick and weed control, advertising expenses, costs related to general park maintenance, and upgrades to the park.

## Department to commemorate Vietnam War anniversary

SOMERS — The Town of Somers joins thousands of organizations across the country as a commemorative partner supporting the Department of Defense in a Vietnam War commemoration.

The commemoration will take place at 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 29, in the Town of Somers auditorium, 600 Main St. The keynote speaker is Thomas J. Saadi, commissioner with the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs. Light refreshments will be available.

As a lasting memento of the nation's gratitude, veterans will receive a Presidential proclamation, a Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin, and a Certificate of Distinction from the Town of Somers. Surviving spouses of those who served are also eligible for recognition.

This includes Veterans classified as "Vietnam Era Veterans," when the period covered is Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975.

To be included in this event, veterans must provide name, address, city, zip, branch of service, their DD-214 (honorable discharge) rank, and service dates. Email the information to [Veterans@SomersCT.gov](mailto:Veterans@SomersCT.gov) or mail to Town of Somers, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, 600 Main St., Somers, CT

06071. The SDVA will hold five other ceremonies up until Memorial Day 2025.

## Historian to present 'American material culture and why it matters'

AVON — WETHERSFIELD — Connecticut historian and preservationist William Hosley will present 'American Material Culture and Why It Matters,' a three-part Zoom webinar on March 31, April 7 and 14, from 7 to 8 p.m. Tickets are now on sale for all three lectures in the series.

History and memory are traditionally made from written records: letters, government documents, newspapers, diaries, account books and more. These are the primary tools of historians, but they are not the only tools. Cultural material — art, architecture, artifacts, and archaeology — also preserve and reveal the shape of time. They are living remnants of the past that raise questions and cover aspects of the past not easily found in the written record. The lives of ordinary people, workers, women, the enslaved, children, craftsmen, artists, rural people, real people (and not just movements), soldiers, etc.

This series will include an introduction to American Material Culture, American Chairs: A History, and It's All Greek to Me: An Appreciation.

Hosley is writing a book about the public work of local history and how it restores public spirit, one great place at a time. He has been a thought leader in the place-making and #LearnLocal movements and served on the advisory committee of the Connecticut State Office of Culture & Tourism.

Tickets for each individual American Material Culture and Why It Matters webinar are \$10 for museum and NSCDA-CT members and \$12 for the general public. All lectures will be presented on Zoom.

Visit <https://webb-deane-stevens.org/category/current-new-events/> or call 860-529-0612 for more information.

## Playhouse on Park Comedy Night series continues

WEST HARTFORD — Tickets are on sale for the Comedy Night series at Playhouse on Park, 244 Park Road. For tickets, visit [www.playhouseonpark.org](http://www.playhouseonpark.org) or call the Playhouse on Park box office at 860-523-5900, ext. 10.

On Saturday, April 2, at 8 p.m., Chris Monty is set to headline, with a feature by Howie Mason. Doors open 30 minutes prior to the show. Tickets are \$17.50, all seats reserved. Visit [www.PlayhouseOnPark.org](http://www.PlayhouseOnPark.org) for up-to-date Covid-19 policies. These policies will be reevaluated regularly.

Turn to Community News, Page 11

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# Who Killed Comedy? Rockville creative writing students producing first Murder Mystery since 2019

By Steve Smith  
Courant Community

VERNON — Rockville High School's murder mystery play has been an annual event for several years. The pandemic halted the production in 2020 and precautions prevented 2021's production from happening.

This year's whodunit explores the death of comedy, and the suspects are the types of comedy, including stand-up, sarcastic, slapstick, memes, dark, and improv comedy — as well as dad jokes — represented by a trio of characters.

Clarissa Halpryn, a junior, is the script's chief writer, and she said that the show opens with all of the characters getting kicked out of the comedy club. A detective appears, announces the death of comedy, and proceeds to raise suspicions and motives about each of the characters.

"This is something we started brainstorming last year. We toyed with the idea of, instead of kinds of comedy, portraying actual comedians," Halpryn said. "But, we ended up going with kinds of comedy, because real people would have a specific voice, and it would be more fun for us to personify the different types of comedy, because we could give them distinct voices with-

*"It's great to see the process of it, especially since it was my class who wrote it this time, and getting to see the drafts and be a part of it, I think that's the best part - getting involved in the production in all different areas, not just acting."*

— Samara Mercado

out worrying about what these people are actually like."

Senior Samara Mercado portrays "improv," and said she's glad to be back, as she's been part of the production since she was a freshman.

"It's great to see the process of it, especially since it was my class who wrote it this time, and getting to see the drafts and be a part of it, I think that's the best part - getting involved in the production in all different areas, not just acting," she said.

But she is enjoying the acting also.

"It's the comedy of it all. In past productions, there were comedic aspects, but this time, we're all getting out of our comfort zone, and focusing on the comedy of it. We're not just creating our own characters, we're basing the characters on our own bits," Mercado

said.

To work on their roles, each actor had to perform at the beginning of each rehearsal. For Mercado, that meant creating an improv bit, and not being able to stop until the other actors guessed what the setting and/or character was.

"Standup would have to tell a stand-up joke. The dads had to tell dad jokes. We all really focused on getting into our characters' mindsets, and what it really means to be this type of comedian," Mercado said.

"I had to watch a lot of John Mulaney videos," said sophomore Morgan Fischer, who plays "stand-up," explaining her method of acting research.

"I did a lot of scrolling through Netflix, to see different types of comedians, to see what style I wanted to play," she said. "Once

I figured it out, I kind of meshed multiple people together. It's a lot of Mulaney."

Halpryn said it was especially fun writing the "dad" characters.

"There are three of them, and they tell a joke that all three of them have a part in telling, and they kind of do that throughout," she said. "Everyone loves dad jokes, and everyone loves to hate dad jokes."

Multiple endings have been created. The audience votes during intermission on who it thinks committed the murder, and the results of the vote will play out in Act II. Those who voted for the correct killer are entered into a raffle for prizes.

All of the students involved said it's great to be part of a production again, after the long wait since the last one.

"It's pretty exciting. We did not have any productions at all last year. It's nice to do a real production again, but I think it's fun that it's the murder mystery. It's fairly well known in the area. People come to have a good time. It will be a lot of fun for everybody to come back to it, after so long of not having anything."

"Who Killed Comedy?" will be performed March 31 and April 1 at 7 p.m. in the Rockville High School Auditorium. Tickets are \$7 and include two raffle tickets.



Standup, played by Morgan Fischer, is an amalgam of several



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Several different stand-up comedians, including John Mulaney. **STEVE SMITH PHOTOS**



Improv (Samara Mercado) tries to come up with the words, on the spot, explaining why she couldn't be the killer.



Memes (Joey Gorski) takes a ride on the back of Slapstick (Josh Grisales) in the show's climactic fight scene.



Sarcasm (Ryan Harvey) explains how he couldn't be the killer (as if that would even be possible).

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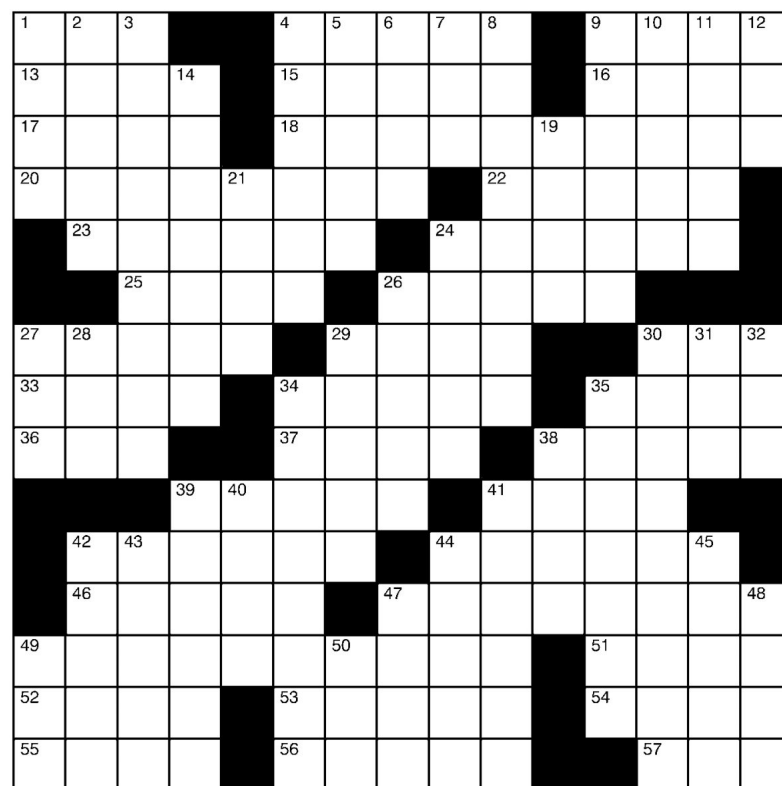
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## NEWS

**CROSSWORD** Solution located elsewhere in this section

### Good Stuff



CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil Manausa

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Community News

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Simsbury Library hosting program on allergies

SIMSBURY — The Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow St., is hosting ‘Seasonally Supported: Herbal Remedies for Seasonal Allergies’ from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 24.

Join Nora Toomey, clinical herbalist of True Bloom, to discuss the roots of seasonal allergies, and learn how to support the body with plants that not only address the most common symptoms but can prevent allergies entirely.

Trout Unlimited seeking volunteers for conservation project

FARMINGTON — The Farmington Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited is again planning a March project to cut Oriental Bittersweet vines attached to trees along the

river from the Farmington meadows/flats to Tunxis Mead Park.

Volunteers will spend two to three hours outdoors working along a section of the river to cut vines. Doing so also prevents the vine from producing the pernicious orange seeds so attractive to the birds.

Temperatures should be seasonal in March but weather is uncertain, so they are targeting Saturday, March 26, for the first conservation project of 2022.

Volunteers will meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot on Meadow Road, across from the model aircraft field. Teams will then be dispatched to relevant sections along the river.

Volunteers should wear work clothes, work boots and heavy gloves. Do not forget tick protection. Please bring a lopper and a small bow saw. Chain saws for thick vines and pruning shears for smaller ones would also be helpful.

In order to create balanced teams, RSVP by registering on Eventbrite. Visit [www.fvtu.org](http://www.fvtu.org) to RSVP or to check for weather updates. Contact 860-678-7245, 347-491-9301 or email [williamcase@comcast.net](mailto:williamcase@comcast.net) or [seafarer0520@att.net](mailto:seafarer0520@att.net) for more information.

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# A stealthy kind of hatchback

By William Heald  
Special to Courant Community

The late 1990s and early 2000s introduced what many considered a disturbing trend: cars, regardless of brand, were all starting to look the same.

That said, there have still been some real individuals among the crowd; vehicles that not only look unique and attractive but still manage to have a strong brand identity incorporated in their styling.

One interesting design choice that's been popping up is the sedan that has a bit of a secret: even though it appears to have a conventional trunk, it actually sports a hatchback. This adds a bit of additional functionality to an already useful package, and when the car in question is a BMW M-series you have a very tantalizing machine.

Known for outstanding performance (enhanced by available all-wheel-drive), the M-class sedan in this case is the compact M440i X-Drive Gran Coupe. A sleek, luxury sports machine the M440i also has some mild hybrid technology to add some efficiency to the performance, showing that it is possible to produce a high-output drive-train with decent fuel economy and plenty of character to round out an already exhilarating package.

Built on a 112-inch wheelbase, the M440i Gran Coupe is armed with all-wheel-drive, and is powered by a soulful Turbocharged Inline Six engine supplemented with a mild hybrid system. The power output is 382 horsepower, and the gearbox is an 8-speed sport automatic transmission. BMW's X-Drive is the company's state-of-the-art 4WD system that not only works well in

both dry pavement and slick conditions, it's sophisticated enough to allow different front and rear tires sizes for optimum balance and handling.

The 48-volt hybrid system is invisible in operation but undoubtedly is a part of the engine's smooth power delivery, which is ample throughout the rev range and truly satisfying. BMW's always do everything better at higher speeds, for they are bred for Germany's Autobahn highway system that has very high speed limits (and in some stretches, no speed limit at all for certain kinds of vehicles).

The M440i has all the goods (including superb brakes) for high speed work, and is quiet, comfortable and well balanced. The X-Drive AWD system worked very well in the snow, which it had to deal with frequently during my week with it.

The cabin of this svelte sedan is cozy but sufficiently roomy, and our tester was graced with Tacora red Vernasca leather upholstery. The front buckets offer great support for aggressive driving yet are very accommodating on longer trips. The driver's instrument pod is 100% virtual analog in nature and is legible but not as classy as BMW's old mechanical units.

The rear seats are comfortable and though snug (this is a compact after all) has sufficient room for two adults. The rear hatch opens to a roomy cargo area, and 60/40 rear seatbacks increase luggage space when needed.

The 2022 BMW M440i X-Drive Gran Coupe is EPA rated 22 MPG city/29 highway and has a base price of \$58,200. With options, the MSRP came to \$68,620. [www.bmwusa.com](http://www.bmwusa.com)



WILLIAM HEALD / SPECIAL TO COURANT COMMUNITY

## Refresh your outdoor space with these 5 tips



(BPT) - Over the last few years, you've likely spent more time at home than ever before. As a result, you're more conscious of how you use your space and how design can impact your comfort and ease. To give you a bit more variety beyond your home's walls, consider redesigning your outdoor spaces to create a haven for recreation and relaxation. Best of all, outdoor spaces add value to your home if you plan to sell.

If you need ideas on how to revamp your outdoor spaces, consider these top five outdoor design trends. Get inspired and create your own outdoor oasis.

### 1. Functionality

Homeowners are prioritizing day-to-day use of their outdoor spaces instead of entertaining, driving a need for functionality. Practical elements like lighting and audio technology can elevate the outdoor space. Other features like shade structures, privacy walls and screens, built-in barbecue grills and Wi-Fi allow you to use the space for working, relaxing, cooking and more.

### 2. Defined rooms

Whether it's an outdoor kitchen, office or living room, homeowners are leaning toward more efficient, defined outdoor spaces. Homeowners want to use outdoor living on a day-to-day basis to unwind, connect with nature and take advantage of the health and well-being benefits the outdoors provide. Having an outdoor office can increase your productivity while decreasing stress as you enjoy the greenery and fresh air. Adding an outdoor kitchen may inspire you to make dishes using herbs and veggies you've grown in your garden, and an outdoor living room can help you bring the family together at the end of the school and workday.

### 3. Monochromatic colors with accents

While lighter, tone-on-tone color palettes remain popular, accent colors and accessories are on the rise. Using cool, monochromatic tones with choice accent colors can create a brighter or contrasting outdoor living space. Jetset, Belgard's 2022 Color of the Year, is a true blue that is the perfect pop of color to enhance any color palette. "Jetset is a much-needed dose of liveliness and joy," said Joe Raboine, director of residential hardscapes at Belgard. "It represents the excitement of a new year and the readiness to do more, be more and live more."

### 4. Modular design and geometric patterns

Another popular trend is modular, geometric standard patterns composed of clean lines and simple formats. Simple patterns create a modern, uncluttered aesthetic that emphasizes furniture or other focal points in the space. Large format patterns and pavers also lend themselves to this style, allowing for more efficient installation.

### 5. Entangled design

As people blend their outdoor spaces to serve as extensions of their homes, many are focusing on entangled design, which combines the surrounding landscape with the hardscape design. Fractured edges with no defined break, natural stone transitions and irregular edges blended with boulders, grass and aggregate create a more natural, organic look that enhances design continuity. To increase the depth of greens, grays and other neutral tones associated with entangled, biophilic design, consider using Jetset as the accent color for your outdoor spaces.

Feeling inspired but don't know where to start? For more inspiration and a templated approach to design outdoor spaces that fit your needs and style, visit [Belgard.com/Rooms](http://Belgard.com/Rooms).



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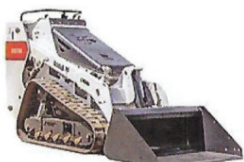
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